DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 319 535 PS 018 841

AUTHOR Nurss, Joanne R.
TITLE "I Can Read That": Using Logos in the Early Childhood Classroom.
PUB DATE Oct 88
NOTE 8p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Reading; Context Effect; *Dramatic Play; Early Childhood Education; Guidelines; *Learning Activities; *Learning Centers (Classroom); *Young Children
IDENTIFIERS *Brand Names

ABSTRACT

The use of logos in the early childhood classroom is one aspect of a rich written language environment in which the young child can begin to acquire literacy in a meaningful way. The early childhood classroom provides many opportunities for the use of logos in context. Sociodramatic play provides one such opportunity. Whether the play is arranged around a home center or other theme, it will provide ample opportunities to include packages, signs, and labels appropriate to particular themes. This form of exposure to print in a meaningful context will help children begin to make the transition to reading out of context, the next step toward fluent reading. Examples of uses of logos and print in classroom learning centers--including the home center, block center, and other centers, such as the fast-food restaurant, supermarket, toy store, airport, and post office--are included. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED319535

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"I Can Read That!": Using Logos in the Early Childhood Classroom

Joanne R. Nurss, Ph.D.
Professor of Early Childhood Education
Georgia State University
University Plaza
Atlanta, GA 30303

October, 1988

PS 018841

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Joanne R. Nurss

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What words can the children in your class read? Their names? What about McDonald's? Toys 'R Us? 7-Eleven? Coca-Cola? Most teachers of young children reply that indeed many of their students can read these common logos, especially in their natural context. What the children seem to learn is the color, shape, distinctive print features, and design. They have learned to associate the logo with the location or product. (See Figure 1 for examples.)

Naturally, the children first learn the logos that are most distinctive and that are associated with favorite places or products. In fact, they generalize the meaning associated with many of the logos, often calling a logo by the generic name of the place or product it represents. For example, COLGATE may be read as toothpaste, KROGER as grocery store, or CORN FLAKES as cereal. While this fact may be disturbing to the companies paying to advertise their products and services, it supports an important idea about how children develop literacy. When young children have the opportunity to see print in their environment and to respond to its meaning, they focus on understanding the written symbols. This is similar to the way in which they focused on understanding oral symbols when they were learning to talk. They responded to the meaning of the oral communication in a particular context, not to isolated sounds. Similarly if children are introduced to writing and reading by means of the symbols with no context (e.g., letters and sounds in an isolated phonics program or letter formation in a penmanship

program), they fail to focus on meaning or to understand that communication is the purpose of written language. Using logos in the early childhood classroom is one aspect of a rich written language environment in which the young child can begin to acquire literacy in a meaningful manner.

Several studies have considered children's acquisition of logo recognition. In a cross-cultural study of Norwegian and American children (Nurss, 1987; Nurss, 1988), it was noted that 6-year-old children in their final year of kindergarten in Norway could recognize about 37% of the common logos shown to them, while about 54% of the 5-year-old prekindergarten children in the United States could recognize logos common in their culture. In both instances, children who did not recognize a logo frequently gave a generic name, such as toy store for Toys 'R Us or store for K-Mart. In the Test of Early Reading Ability (Reid, Hresko, & Hammill, 1981), three test items require the child to recognize logos. Scoring directions state that any name associated with the logo is to be considered correct. For example, McDonald's is scored correct if the child says the name of any fast food or hamburger restaurant; hamburger, French fries, and milk shake are also accepted (p. 21).

The ability to recognize logos develops over the prekindergarten to kindergarten age span. Harste, Woodward, & Burke (1984) report that the 3-year-olds in their sample were most likely to respond to CREST with a generic or associated word, whereas the 6-year-olds were most likely to

respond with the correct word. Other logos such as JELL-O and Wendy's were also acquired during this same period.

In another study, 3-, 4-, and 5-year old children in a variety of preschool programs were asked to identify 20 popular logos and signs (Isom and Casteel, 1987). There were developmental age trends in the percentage of logos and signs read correctly. Responses were categorized as no response; attended to a charateristic unrelated to words or letters (e.g., color); attempted to name the item; used a letter as a clue; used pictures as clues; gave a related idea; and read the logo or word. The responses in the related idea category were taken as an indication that the children understood the communication function of the print even if they could not read the actual logo.

Natural exposure to logos in the environment appears to be the way most children learn to understand what is being communicated. In the American advertising world, everyone has many opportunities to see product logos on television; in newspapers, magazines, and advertising supplements; and on billboards, sides of buses, and product packaging. One reason for the difference between Norwegian and American children's recognition of logos in the study described above is probably the difference in exposure to advertising in these two cultures. In Norway the television is state-owned and operated and has no advertising. There also is much less advertising elsewhere in Norway compared to the United States. The Norwegian children simply don't see logos as

frequently as do American children.

If exposure to logos is important in learning to recognize them and if recogizing logos is a useful step in developing meaningful literacy skills, how can the early childhood classroom be used to foster literacy development within an active, creative play environment?

The early childhood classroom provides many opportunities for use of logos in context. The socio-dramatic play area immediately comes to mind. Whether it is arranged as a home center or around another theme, there will be ample opportunities for packages, signs, and labels appropriate to the theme. When the children can recognize several logos, words can be added to the signs using regular manuscript print. This exposure to print within a meaningful context will help the children begin to make the transition to reading out of context, the next step toward fluent reading. Examples of uses of logos and print in the early childhood classroom include:

Home center:
- Food packages in the kitchen
- Cleaning product packages (empty)
- Baby products in the nursery
- Newspapers, magazines, advertising supplements in the living room
- Hair & tooth care products in the bathroom

Block center:
- Road signs
- Billboards made by pasting magazine or newspaper ads on cardboard attached to a popsicle stick stuck in clay
- Logos on trucks, trains, planes, boats
- Town buildings with signs; garage, gas stations with logos, parking

deck, for example.

Other centers:
- Labels on paint, crayons, clay
- Labels on puzzles, games, manipulatives
- Labels on ingredients for cooking
- Labels on tapes, records, books
- Logos on storage areas
- Words on the computer keyboard & software program

Special centers:

Fast-food restaurant:
- Menus
- Hats
- Placemats, napkins
- Food containers
- Drink containers
- Advertisements

Supermarket:
- Food packages (empty)
- Labels for each section
- Specials
- Advertisements
- Coupons
- Shopping bags

Toy Store:
- Toy packages
- Labels for each section
- Sale items
- Advertisements
- Shopping bags

Airport:
- Logos on planes
- Ticket counter signs
- Logos at snack bar
- Logos at newsstand
- Direction signs in airport and on runways

Post Office:
- Logo on mail boxes & mail trucks
- Logo & signs at stamp window
- Stamps & cancel marks
- Names & addresses on mail

These examples illustrate the many ways logos and meaningful print can easily be integrated into the curriculum. The purpose of this exposure is for children to learn that print represents oral speech; that print is

meaningful; and that print can often be "figured out" from the context in which it appears. Mastery of these concepts will be a good start along the literacy road for all young children, allowing them to make sense of print and to feel positive about their initial exposure to reading.

References

Harste, Jerome, Woodward, Virginia, & Burke, Carolyn. (1984). Language Stories and Literacy Lessons. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational.

Isom, Bess A. & Casteel, Carolyn P. (1987). Prereaders' Understanding of the Function of Print: Characteristic Trends in the Process, International Journal of Early Childhood, 19, 43-49.

Nurss, Joanne R. (1988). Development of Written Communication in Norwegian Kindergarten Children. Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 32, 33-48.

Nurss, Joanne R. (1988). Some Indicators of Literacy Development in Prekindergarten: A Research Report. Atlanta: Georgia State University. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 287 601.

Reid, D. Kim, Hresko, Wayne P. & Hammill, Donald D. (1981). Test of Early Reading Ability. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.